

Prescribed Burning for Wildlife

Job Sheet

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)
University of Missouri Extension – The School of Natural Resources

For:	County:
Field(s):	Farm #:
Date:	Tract #:
Designed By:	Contact Information:

WHY USE PRESCRIBED BURNING FOR WILDLIFE?

PURPOSE: Prescribed burning is applying a controlled fire to a predetermined area as a habitat management tool. It improves wildlife habitat by setting back the successional stage of an area, controlling undesirable vegetation and reducing wildfire hazards.



SPECIFICATIONS:

- Prior to burn, develop a written burn plan to outline the burn job requirements.
- Burns should be conducted under the supervision of a qualified and trained individual.
- Burning should be managed with consideration for wildlife needs such as nesting and feeding cover.
- Fall and winter burns generally favor the forb (wildflower) component in mixed stands, and helps improve plant structure and diversity for wildlife habitat.
- Burning in spring and fall of the same year greatly reduces stands of cool-season grasses, including tall fescue.
- For greatest wildlife benefit, native warm season grass should be burned between July 16 and March 15. Cool season grasses should be burned between March 15 and April 30.
- Burn the area on a three-to-five year cycle to control woody encroachment. When burning to control undesirable sprouting - woody vegetation, it may be necessary to burn two or more consecutive years.
- Patch burning can be used in conjunction with livestock grazing to provide both improved grazing and wildlife cover. Burning up to 1/3 of each pasture or paddock each year has been shown to double grassland bird populations.

MAINTENANCE:

- Burn approximately one-third of the managed area annually. Strips or blocks may be left unburned within the burned area to provide a continuous source of cover and nesting habitat.
- Maintain mowed/plowed permanent firebreaks according to the burn plan.

PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide nesting and brood habitat for quail, turkey and other ground nesting wildlife.
- Provide natural food and cover for rabbits, deer, quail, and turkeys.

Consult with NRCS or MDC wildlife biologists and private land conservationists, or University Extension for additional recommendations.

Comment:



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